THE Mischief of Dissensions:

OR, A

PERSWASIVE

TO

Dr. Stillingfleet

DEAN of

St. PAULS,

TOGETHER WITH

His *RESPONDENTS*, &c.

TO A

Seasonable Alliance from their *Literal War.*

SHEWING

The Danger thereof, especially at this Ambiguous Juncture of Time and Affairs.

Ει ἀλλήλους δάκνετε ἢ κατεσθίετε βλέπετε μὴ ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἀναλωθῆτε.

LONDON,
Printed for *John Kidgell* at the *Atlas* in *Cornhill* near the *Royal Exchange*, 1682.

THE

Mischief of Ambiguous:

OR, A

PERSWASIVE

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Dr. Stillingfleet

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TO A

Seasonable Alliance from their Literal Wit.

SHEWING

The Danger thereof, especially at this Ambiguous Junction of Time and Affairs.

LONDON,

Printed for John Riggall at the Atlas in Cornhill, near the Royal Exchange, 1684.

THE PREFACE.

WE being at this present tossed with various Perturbations, it must needs be very unseasonable to encrease our Calamity in being our own molesters; this is ever dangerous, but now it seems desperate, by reason of the thick Cloud of Popery threatning us; and how soon it will shower down on our heads we know not. Therefore the practick part of Religion must be chiefly in these times regarded, as requiring our utmost industry, seeming to call upon us; ζητεῖν κελεύων. Seek it quasi Via tutissima, as the safe way, and only way too, conducing to our Happiness, without which we may to our Eternity dig for Felicity, but find nothing but that such precious Mines are not in our English ground.

But herein consists the excellency of fraternal Amity, in that it exceedingly promotes the honour of God, in the disappointment and detriment of our Enemies; and hence no wonder that evangelical injunction of our blessed Saviour is so oft inculcated, ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους. Love one another,

ther, *which for these many years hath been laid aside, as if Christianity it self had been out of date, and its redemption and reedification not endeavoured in our late Civil Wars with respect to religion, the unhappy occasion whereof was exhibited, in that stroke given in a* Sermon Preached at Guild-hall Chappel, *called* The Mischief of Separation, *which Sermon* (it is feared) *hath indeed done more Mischief than good. No sober considering men, whether* Conformists *as well as* Nonconformists, *denying it to be otherwise than ill timed, confessing it to give our deadly Enemies, the Papists, incouragement, who doubtlesly cannot be otherwise than exhilerated at our Protestant Dissentions, in that it gives them opportunity to prosecute their execrable Projects with the greater vigour and success; it is therefore our needfull and indispensable work, as we would expect the Benediction of God from above, Peace and Tranquility among our selves, in laying aside these fruitless divisions, and utterly abandoning and forsaking them with that most just Excommunication, that* we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God. *So then let us in one blessed unanimous consent joyn with one shoulder, to bear the burthen of Reformation, and consequently of Unity and Concord, the inseparable companions of an hearty Reformation, which will tend to the obtaining and augumenting of our prosperity and felicity both Temporal and Eternal.*

To my Worthy Friend S. P. Esquire.

SIR,

OF late having found a dismal and sore Specimen of Contention in a Literal War, between Dr. *Edward Stillingfleet Dean* of *Pauls* and several of the Nonconformists; I fear Sir these Civil Warrs between our selves may produce evil Consequences: for the fire of Protestant dissensions, especially at this time kindled and blown up, may dismally give the Popish party advantage to their designed ends of consuming us, by adding fewel to the fire of their malice: but doubtless our Concord would be cool Water, tending to quench or put out that fire of Hell, much conducing to the flourishing of our Nation and Religion; for could I be willing to pawn my blood, that this much pleaseth our Enemies, *viz.* to see us together by the Ears, that they may come in for a share, yea, and a bloody one too.

Therefore in my Judgment, better is it for us (especially at this juncture of time) though in some things dissenting, yet to unite, rather than break open a Gap, for our Enemies to enter at, and destroy us.

I am perswaded that *Certamen Religiosum* is of all Warrs the most dangerous; for as it disturbs the mind,

mind, ſcandals Religion, hardens Infidels, diſhonours God, it alſo frequently is the Incentive to the Field, &c. But I could wiſh it were better conſidered, as alſo that the Doctor had forborn the firſt unhappy ſtroke; But Sir, alas! great evils uſually attend high Promotions, common experience teacheth us how hard a matter it is for a man to ſwallow the great Goblet of Promotion, and not to be choaked therewith: Indeed it will be matter of Solace to our minds, if we can ſay like *Job*, That *Gold we have not made our hope, nor fine Gold our Confidence*; but how difficult is it to have a copious affluence, and the Heart not hail therewith? Then no wonder, *that it is a very hard matter for a Rich man to be ſaved.* For if affiance in Riches poſſeſſeth the Room of any mans Heart, it is a great evil, in that it ſtrongly inclines to conceit of our ſelves; an Impiety to which mans corrupt Nature is ſtrongly propenſe; eſpecially amidſt plentifull fruition; which conceitedneſs tends to a contempt of our Brethren, which is odious in the eyes of a Pure God: For *he is Love*, (as ſaith the Apoſtle) *and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*; as alſo that of St. *Paul*, *Love endureth all things*. It is certainly a Grace of the firſt magnitude, very magnificent and ſplendid, beautifull both in the eyes of God and man: But we had need be cautious, according as *Paul* moſt excellently and ſweetly adviſeth in *Galat. chap. 5. ver. 15. If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not devoured one of another.*

And leave it to any rational man, if Proteſtant Diſſentions be not the very road to Popiſh deſtructi-

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ons; their projects doubtless being embarked on these two bottoms, to debauch and divide us; at least-wise, with diabolical Cunning to endeavour the Debauchery of the Wilder sort, and the Division of the Sober; that those who only affect the Theory of Divinity, may not want matter of dispute, remaining still restless, never attaining the practick part; and doubtlesly men only acquiring speculative Notions, without any application, is the principal reason why so many unorthodox Opinions are broached and imbibed, and the Judgments of others hereby corrupted, the Popish Party by divers cunning insinuations assuming several shapes of Professions, in matters relating to Religion, gradually infuse their own impious and ungodly principles. What shall we suppose of the Quakers, omitting nominating any more, save the *Arminians*, which professedly deny Popery, but upon my serious deliberate Thoughts find them leaning towards it, as it were hanckering after the Onions and Garlick of *Egypt*; their Opinions seeming to me as a Gate or inlet for Popery?

And know we not by experience, that this both hath been and is the practice of the Jesuites, &c. to insinuate themselves especially among the Quakers, &c. or the weaker illiterate sort of People? As *they enter not themselves* (I fear) *into the Kingdom of Heaven, so are they likewise an impediment or hinderance to those that would*, if not sometimes a Total obstruction.

And, Oh how fearfull a thing is it, Sir, for us to encourage these wicked Enemies of God, these ill-wishers to his Church, and dividers thereof!

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this fire from Hell to consume us (if God prevent not); therefore it is time these Coals of Contention be extinguished, lest they catch hold and consume us.

But if so be our Disunion is so pernicious, so greatly complying with, and gratifying the evil intents of our enemies, then certainly the most effectual way to be our own Friends, likewise to frustrate, and disappoint the Projects and Expectations of our deadly Enemies, is to unite in Love; and notwithstanding there may be some dissension in Judgment, not to let it grow so wide as to cause an absolute difference in affection. Indeed I would desire, and much would it conduce to our good, if these Jarrings were forborn, considering we are Brethren, and why should we fall out by the way? and seeing on both sides amongst the Orthodox, there is no difference in fundamental Points.

But he that gives the first stroke does worst; *Nocens tacet*, Truth must be defended, therefore a sober impartial Vindication can't be blamed; but there is a time for this: nevertheless in my thoughts the present time calls for our Divines to be endeavouring to cut the Sinews of Popery, to batter down the Walls of *Babylon*; Let us beware of temporizing, let not Promotion blind, or Uncharitableness byas; let no man confide in his Parts, Learning, Wealth or Dignities, but consider *Promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, but from the Lord only*; and if so, let us endeavour to find it be in mercy; for Wealth, and Promotion; may as well be a Curse as a Blessing a Knife that is sharp may be serviceable, but to

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cut our Throats withall, is greatly hurtful; a Sword by how much the keener, by so much the more excellent, but in the hand of a Mad-man by so much the more deadly.

And therefore *let Brotherly Love remain*, following the Advice of the Blessed Apostle, *If a Brother offend, not to despise him, but in the Spirit of Meekness to restore such an one, considering with thy self that thou mayest also be tempted.* But alas poor frail Creatures that we are! how apt to despise an Erring Brother, and how little sensible of our own weakness, and how apt our frail Natures are to decline or turn aside to our Enmity and Contentions which are very dangerous, and Divisions which are Church-ruining! *How lovely and pleasant a thing is it then for Brethren to live together in unity!* It is the new Commandment, yea, and a Command in special, and verily a necessary essential part of true Christianity; and doth not disobedience to one Divine Command render us conscious of breaking the whole? And if Hatred to our Brethren be an Evidence of one cordially embracing *Christianity*, what then will become of our *Bibles*? but if they which are *Verbum Dei* be true, it is an Evidence of an unholy unchristian temper.

But alas how miserable are we become through our various divisions! how desolate do we sit! a thing greatly to be lamented; I find mostly that our Differences are in Affection. In Judgment

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we have many, and really exceeding Erroneous, *viz.* the *Ramists*, to whom we neither seek, or or hope for Reconciliation, believing them to be in their vile Principles, irreconcileable to the very Law of God; endeavouring as it were practically to rend the Decalogue out of the Bible, by their wicked Principles of Impiety with respect to the first Table, and of Immorality in reference to the second.

The *Antisabbatarians* pluck out to their power the fourth, notwithstanding a *Memento* prefixed before it, as also fixed in the heart of the Decalogue.

The *Antinomians* they are for taking away the whole Law at once, denying it, and rendring it wholly useless to Christians, whether as a Rule, or in it's coactive or punitive power.

The *Socinians* also, a most dangerous and wicked Enemy, a dreadful disturber of the Church, and Violator of the Gospel, endeavouring with *Arrian* to quench the *Deity* of the *Son of God*, denying also our Redemption by the *Blood* and *Satisfaction* of *Christ*, to the high dishonour of the riches of Gods Grace, and hurt of Souls, endeavouring to deprive us of the benefit of the New Testament.

The *Antiscripturists*, who are the Enemies to the Scriptures, cashiering both Old and New Testament.

And

And the *Antitrinitarians*, who are blaſphemers of the whole Trinity.

And the *Familiſts*, who leaving the ſure Rule of the Word, truſt to Satanical Delusions.

Not to leave the *Separatiſts* who abſent all publick Communion, pretending that for which they have no ground, *viz.* to live above Ordinances, Poor Creatures! becauſe they know not the marrow of them, they live above that which they know not.

But theſe I wave, which, or moſt of which are far diſtant from the Communion of the Church of *England*, whether as to the Conforming Orthodox party, who embrace the Pure Doctrine of the Book of Homilies, or as to their diſſenting Brethren of the Non-Conformiſts. And therefore theſe moderate differences ought not to make immoderate diſtances: But I muſt needs grant, that difference in Judgement frequently cauſeth alienation in Heart, and ſwelling of mind; and hereby do we ſee, that thoſe Friends who have been near allied, and held an intimacy of acquaintance, when they have come to claſh one againſt another in Opinions, have alſo forſaken their former intimacy, and frequently grown Enemies, in oppoſing and cenſuring each other: and by reaſon of this diſunion come ſo many Invectives in Pulpit and Preſs. For to tell the truth, in ſome Churches there is ſo much inveighing againſt their contrary Party, as that

it hath amazed me to consider, whether these men thought they had their Commission from God to preach the Gospel, or to declaim against a particular party of Protestants?

But if so be that we are unanimously Protestants in the main, dissenting only in some particular Opinions, in the holding and maintaining of which dependeth not Salvation or Damnation, is it not very unreasonable, that the poor Souls attending their Ministry should be denyed the wholsom Bread of Life, and held to that Hay and Stubble which neither is Food suited to their Nature, or Nourishment? What good doth it any man on a Sabbath day to enter into the Church, and instead of a good practical Sermon, which tendeth through Gods grace to warm the Affections, and influence the Practice, to hear a speech of Reviling or contemning the Dissenters? if this person be one desirous to hear Gods Word, and regards the way *ad vitam æternam*, I durst be confident he approveth not hereof, this being the way rather to starve than feed his Soul.

Let there not therefore be such Invectives in Pulpit and Press, which tend not to the profit of the good, but to incensing the Malice of the bad; for hereby many are influenced to Raillery, and contemning others, but for what they understand not; only receiving and entertaining Prejudices, (which tend much to Gods dishonour;) for it (through Satans subtility, and Natures horrid corruption)

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conduceth to an imbittered oppoſition of Religion and holy men, *qua tales*, as they be holy; and ſo conſequently if God beſtoweth not repenting Grace, they perſiſt in this height of Impiety, growing worſe and worſe, obdurated in evil, and deſtitute of good, till at laſt they become Veſſels of Gods fury and Wrath, as they have before ſold themſelves to the Vaſſalage and miſchievous drudgery of the Devil.

And others Heads are puzled about unedifying Controverſies and Debates, whileſt their Hearts are empty of the power of plain *practical Divinity*, and likely ſo to remain, becauſe unconcerned hereat, moſt miſerably prying into Religion more for *Curioſity* than *Salvation*.

But it cannot be denyed, but that the good honeſt practical Divines of both Perſwaſions have, and do much eſteem each other, living and loving as Brethren; and whatever ſome may either ſay or act, it is my obſervation, never finding otherwiſe, but a Sober Orthodox *Conformiſt* regarding, and entertaining good opinions of the *Non-Conformiſts*, and ſo, *è contrario*. For as it is dangerous to impoſe upon other mens Conſciences, ſo likewiſe it's not good or ſafe to condemn another, becauſe capable of acting ſome indifferent thing in it ſelf, notwithſtanding I diſſent herefrom, yet cannot but confeſs it not to be neceſſary to Salvation, or dangerous of it's loſs; why then ſhould I judge and cenſure him as an Heretick, or a perſon

ſon not worthy of having any Communion with-all.

And verily, Sir, this Union in heart, and living *in love* as *Brethren*, is the way for Proteſtant Churches to flouriſh: let none be ſilenced, or hindred, let all Proteſtant Miniſters unanimouſly joyn in preaching Chriſt in his Perſon, Offices, Merit and Spirit, *&c.* and not lye idle, in jarring at one another; this is not the way for their Maſters work to be performed: *Va mihi ſi non Evangelizavero*, ſayes that bleſſed induſtrious Apoſtle, who *preached Chriſt in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, rejoycing that Chriſt was preached, although out of envy, as well as out of good will*, and declaring his reſolution as to that his Heaven-ſpirited Joy, that *he would rejoyce*; ſo that the Intereſt of *Jeſus Chriſt* might be propagated, *Paul* would be pleaſed, and his Joy excited: But in order to it's more free courſe, Unity was found neceſſary, therefore ſhall we find him in tracing his Epiſtles as we read, exceedingly exhorting hereunto, and dehorting from Strifes, Envyings, Debates, *&c.* Now in *Galathians, Chap. 3. Verſ.* 1. you ſhall find him calling them Fooliſh, *O fooliſh Galathians*, &c. by reaſon of their Apoſtaſie from the Doctrine which he had taught and they embraced; but trace him down to the end of the Epiſtle, and you ſhall find him often calling them *Brethren*; which inſtructs us in a good Leſſon, *viz.* That in difference of Judgment and Opinion, let there be no diviſion in Affection; for it is a ſore temptation, and bait of

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the Devil, to raiſe alienation and averſation in the Affections, when he perceives the Opinions not agreeing: But Diviſion it is the deadly plague of the Church, mortally tending to it's overthrow and ruine. But the Church, which ſhould walk in conformity to *Chriſt*, who is Love, whoſe Spirit is the *Spirit of Meekneſs*, alas! how does it, and hath it for theſe many years dreadfully degenerated, and thoſe therein profeſſing Membership to *Chriſt* endeavoured to rend in pieces his Intereſt? But in all Ages he hath reſerved to himſelf faithful Witneſſes, ſtanding up for his Glory and his Churches good; endeavouring our Peace and Reconciliation.

And ſeeing the ſumme of Evangelical Obedience is Love, *let us walk according to that Rule, that Peace may be upon us*; how oft have we it repeated and inculcated upon us, *Bear one anothers burthens, and be kind, be tender-hearted, forgiving one another*, backed with this indiſputable incitement, *becauſe Chriſt for Gods ſake hath loved you?*

Nay, can we be ignorant, how grand a deſign *Satan* the deadly Enemy of the Church hath, to rend it with multitude of Diviſions, well knowing how effectual a way that is to ſuppreſs the encreaſe of the Goſpel, and to advance the intereſt of his Kingdom; moſt clearly diſcerning, that if we cloſely ſhould follow the moſt bleſſed counſel of the Apoſtle, *viz. To be all of the ſame mind, to ſpeak the ſame thing*, would be dangerous, that he-

he might have none of us: But that in this life, leading a life of ſimple Chriſtianity, *at peace with God, and alſo among our ſelves*; which is *præguſtus Cœli*, even the foretaſte of Heavenly felicity, working in us an aptitude and meetneſs for the fruition of eternal Glory and Beatitude, as alſo comfortably conducting us in the way thereunto, to the ſorrow and vexation of our deadly Enemies, whether Satan, or his Children incarnate, the Popiſh party.

But as we have Enemies without doors, working to their utmoſt the impeding of this happy Unity, ſo likewiſe have we within doors, that ſtrongly oppoſe it; and, as the uſual Proverb is, *We enter the World with a Pope in our Bellies*; we are naturally apt to be puffed up: it is well known that empty Veſſels give the greateſt ſound; likewiſe empty men, who are unacquainted with Religion in it's Excellency and Power, having all unfurniſhed ſave a Head big with ſome giddy Notions of what the Heart affects not, together with ſome Learning, by which this ſpeculative Divine is puffed up, *and whileſt he thinks himſelf to know ſomething*, in reality *knows nothing*; and hence no wonder that oft ſuch men prove Church-troublers.

Others alſo conſcious of a Crime near a-kin and ſometime conſequent of the former, *viz.* Conceitedneſs, which much affects Singularity, by carrying a man oft rather to broach Heterodox Opinions,

nions, than embrace Orthodox; that ſome may be his followers, and it may be go *ſuo nomine*, with the Badge of his own Name, and ſo he become famous, or rather (to ſay truth) infamous.

Others are turned aſide by Intereſt and the power of Unbelief, *Demas*-like, *loving this preſent World*, and prizing it as the Place of their Acquieſcence and Happineſs, Idolatrouſly loving Gold more than God, and (fooliſhly) a good Purſe better than a good Conſcience; not practically minding, that the man that would obtain Salvation, muſt Ungod the World, not in *thinking gain to be godlineſs*: But although he in words and profeſſion may acknowledge a better good than this World, yet in Heart and conſent of the Will, embraces no other; no wonder, *becauſe the God of this World blinds the mans eyes*, inſomuch that ſelfiſh Intereſt ſhall turn him which way it pleaſes, this is indeed greatly to be lamented!

Others by the deceitfulneſs of Riches are choaked, and temporize, in conforming to the Humours and Doctrines moſt in faſhion, to maintain or encreaſe their Honour, unwilling ſtedfaſtly to adhere to a deſpiſed Goſpel, and a perſecuted defamed Truth, not ſuppoſing *Nuda Veritas* will be a Covert to ſhelter them from the Cenſures of the great ones, or gratifie the Itch of Ambition, in tending towards higher Pro-

motions: But, Sir, let them contemplate that thundering *Menax* in the Goſpel, *He that denyeth me before men, him will I deny before my Father, and before the Angels of God.* But oh how natural is it for man to ſet up his Riches for his God, and to fall down and worſhip them?

Others by putting confidence in their Parts, Learning, Wiſdom, and Strength of Reaſon, are hurried and driven to Errors in Religion: for notwithſtanding Religion is not contrary to Reaſon, yet it is above it, ſo far forth as it is carnal or humane, immenſly overreaching, ſurpaſſing and ſurmounting our poor ſhallow Capacities; hence the holy Apoſtle in 11th of the *Romans*, having ſeriouſly conſidered and contemplated the Decrees, Wiſdom and Counſell of God, how does he ſeem to abandon all his Reaſon, though certainly very perſpicuous, and fall into a Paſſionate admiration of the infinite Wiſdom of God? ſaying, *O the depth of the riches both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his Judgments, and his wayes paſt finding out!*

But when by ſhallow Reaſon, as all humane is in it ſelf conſidered, men would dive into Gods depths of Wiſdom and Counſel, oh how greatly are they deceived! what falſe Ideas of Religion do they conceive, into what multitudes of Errors do they plunge themſelves, to their own harm,

harm, to the Churches detriment and moleſtation, in their not reſting on Divine Revelation any further than it would ſuit with carnal Reaſon? I am perſwaded this hath much more damnified the Church than the Perſecutions of it's moſt malignant Oppoſers; it being a God-diſhonouring, crediting him ſo, as no further to reſt in his Word than carnal Reaſon can fathom, it's Truth to believe no further than we can by our Reaſon and Wiſdom trace: Hence iſſued the moſt notorious Hereſies that ever infected the Profeſſing World. It is therefore a needful Maxim to make Gods Word our Rule; better is the moſt illiterate perſon making this Word his Conduct, than the Learnedeſt Hero reſting in the validity of his Reaſon: And hence no wonder the Apoſtle makes this Challenge; *Where is the wiſe? where is the Scribe? where is the diſputer of this World? God hath choſen the poor things of this World*, &c. *and the things which are not, to bring to nought the things which are.* God will have the Revenues of his Glory, and he will have no fleſh to glory in it ſelf; he will bring down the Pride of all fleſh one way or other: But let Reaſon have the place of *Antilla Pietatis*, to be Godlineſſes Handmaid, and let Religion be the Miſtreſs, and have the preheminence, then Reaſon in it's due place is a noble and excellent gift and endowment, ſubſervient to Religion, and in that place it is a good Servant, but otherwiſe a wicked Maſter.

By these or the like means through the horrid depravedness of Nature, and the desperate corruption of Heart, men are seduced, blinded, and byassed; to prevent which, a heart circumcised to love God is necessary, whence most sweetly flowes mutuall Love to one another; for no man that is τοῦ θεοῦ φιλος, but will be τὸ ἀδελφὸς allso: *he that hateth his Brother, and yet saith he loveth God*, we have a Divine warrant from the Word to call that man a Liar.

Mystical Union to Christ, and real Implantation into him, is inseperably accompanyed with fraternal Union: What, love the Head, and not the Members! it is verily impossible. Can a man be in Christ, and yet out with his dear Members? No certainly; Christs true Friend will never be his Members Enemy.

The Holy Spirit inhabiting a mans Heart, even that Spirit of Love and Meekness which are the Fruits of that Holy Spirit, which certainly it will bring forth in that Garden where this blessed Wind bloweth: Now whether or no Strifes, Dissensions, Heats, &c. be fruits of this Spirit, I leave all to judge who shall peruse this Paper.

And, Sir, it is an essential part of the Church of Christ to be conformable to its Head, and certainly in some measure conformable to his

Will are the true Members thereof, however the carriage of some selfish Pretenders to Church-membership may be, whose intent may be rather to devour than feed the Flock, but in this Censure (mentioning it onely by the way) without regard to any particular mans Person.

But, Sir, I fear our late Literal Skirmish between the Doctor, his Vindicators and Respondents, has done us no great good; it hath not tended to beat down prevailing Popery; it hath not been of use to furnish the minds of the People with Arguments against Popish Errours, in well grounding them in the Fundamentals of true Christianity; a work exceedingly requiring and calling for all the Diligence, Parts, Learning and Industry of our Divines to be busied about, seeming now to be as it were the *Unum necessarium*, of indispensible necessity; the Practical preaching up of Christ in his Offices, Priestly, Prophetical and Kingly, the undermining of all which are to the utmost endeavoured by the Papists, yea and ruine too if possible: But it is certain the Lord will maintain his Honour in spight of all opposition. And, Sir, how needful is it for our Divines *to preach Jesus Christ and him Crucified?* A suitable Doctrine for this Juncture of time, wherein the dismal Cloud of Popish Errors and Superstitions threatens to fall on us.

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But ſuppoſing the Doctor is in very truth ſpeaking what the Non-conformiſts juſtly deſerve, (as one of his Admirers ſaid in my hearing) yet it was unſeaſonable, and this pernicious gloomy ſeaſon required ſilence here, and an open Mouth againſt Popery. But I will wave that; *Magna eſt Veritas & prævalebit*: I deſigned not when I began to write, to meddle with the preſent Controverſie, otherwiſe than to hint, of what I could not eſcape.

But this I am *in fine* perſwaded of, let us warre, and fight, and jarre, and bite one another, we are hereby our own deſtroyers, and at laſt may be our own Butchers; and this time calls for a work of far greater neceſſity, and weighty importance, yea and the Concern thereof ſo exceeding ponderous, that if we thus continue, it may have a ſad end, and that ſo grievous, that our ſelves and Poſterities may have impoſed on us the Yoke of Popery, *which neither our ſelves or Fathers have been able to bear*. Which Yoke to prevent, let us unanimouſly adhere to the Truth of the Goſpel, and with one ſhoulder bear the burthen of Reformation; in order to which end let us be exhorted to Unity, and dehorted from Diviſion; for us to expect a flouriſhing Nation and Religion, and to trample on our Enemies, whileſt we continue in Strifes and Conteſts among our ſelves, is a thing impoſſible; but Union

makes

makes this feasable, yea and a thing with facility to be performed: And therefore let us, seeing Christs Body is a Body of Unity, that Spirit of Jesus a Spirit of Love, according to the earnest Exhortation of the Apostle, *Endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of peace*. See his Argument; *For there is one Body, and one Spirit*. It was Christs Intercession to his Father, Oh how Pathetick is that his Prayer in *John* 17th. 1 *That they may be one as we are one, that they all may be one, that they also may be one in us, that they may be made perfect in one*. And this tendeth much to Gods glory, the Supream ultimate end of his true Worshippers, according to that in *Rom.* 15th *That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorifie God*. And I cannot but mention another Scripture, very pertinent to the purpose; 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. wherein the blessed St. *Paul* does most earnestly *beseech them, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they all speak the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and the same Judgment*. And to the *Philippians* we shall find him pressing it as the only thing to be desired, coming in with an *Only let your Conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ, that whether I come to see you, or*

else

else I be absent, I may hear of your Affairs, that ye stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel. And truly Sir, why should the Apostle so adjure us to Unity, were it not of high Concernment to the Promotion of Christianity? for if we inspect but his concluding Farewell to the *Corinthians* in the Second Epistle, *Chap.* 13. *Vers.* 11. *Finally Brethren, farewell, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you.*

We know not how great a Mischief a little fire of Contention may do; it may verily encrease to more ungodliness; Division is the Devils Musick, but it will center in our sorrow. But Unity it is Christs delight, let us follow it, because Gods Injunction, *Follow Peace with all men*; and because a branch of the Covenant of Promise, *I will give them one heart*; and because an Evidence of a Discipleship to Christ; *By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another*: For which also we have the Practice of the Primitive Christians for our Presidents; *The Multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and one soul.*

And

And in short, There is but one God, one Christ, one Faith, &c. Therefore, as the Wise man saves, let us hear *totum hominis*, Fear God and keep his Commandments, and let us not waste our inch of Time, troubling our heads about all the Controversies in the world. We must know this for certain, that there's but one way left us for Salvation: Let us hearken to the summe, *He that believeth on the Son, hath Life, but he that believeth not on the Son, shall not enter into Life, but hath the wrath of God abiding on him.* Again, *He that would be my Disciple, let him deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow me.* Here is no Glossography, plain Terms, the Simple may understand it with facility, though the Wise cannot practise it without the Operations of Omnipotent Grace, therefore our Duty is in leaving Disputing to fall upon Practice.

But how greatly is it to be bewailed, and how dolorous a Complaint may we take up, in that we are circumvented with multitude of erroneous Principles, and hereby the breach of Division grow-

eth wider and wider; and I profeſs, let what will be ſaid, That to teach us Wiſdom and Unity, God will ſend ſome ſevere Diſpenſation, and it is well if Gods Judgments are not impending over our heads for this our ſin; ſhall we then go on to provoke the Lord? Certainly he will vindicate his own Glory, when we have taſted by fearful Experience the ſmart of Gods Judgments for our Diviſions, and he hath let in our Enemies on us, and ſuffered our Fears to overtake us, and let us ſuffer together, then ſhall we certainly cry, *è bello Pax*; No more Warre, we have experimented its evil, but candid Peace ſhall return; but till God by an eminent Act of his Righteouſneſs *putteth forth his hand, and executeth Judgment*, there is little hope hereof, we being ſo greatly degenerated, and the malignant Diſeaſes of our Minds grown inveterate.

But then, Sir, to conclude, how daring are we, when the Symptoms of our ruineby the malicious intentions of our Enemies is preſaged, which through abundant mercy hath been detected, and thereby hindred; to which Plotts, and Conſpiracies againſt our King, Government,

ment, Persons, and Religion, have we given much advantage, and encouragement by our Divisions, yet hath God freely been Gracious still in detecting and defeating them hitherto, and shall we be so foolish and unkind to God, as to still persist in our Iniquity, and as it were wilfully to draw down Judgements on our own heads, and provoke God to withdraw his protecting Providence from us?

I would perswade all men to Obedience *to the Higher Powers, for they be of God*, and it is Gods will that *we should obey Magistrates, and not speak evil of Dignityes*; they are an *Ordinance of God*, and we highly advance Gods honour in esteeming and submitting to his Ordinances; but Conscience prohibiting what the Magistrate enjoyns, *whom should I obey, God or Man, judge ye?* Conscience in mans Soul is Gods Vicegerent, and Conscience wronged will reproach, whose reproaches are intollerable; for my part I rather choose that the whole world should defame me, than my own Conscience accuse me; for Conscience is a bosom Friend, and consequently if a

Friend a most sweet and intimate, if enraged, it is an enemy, from which there is no flying, it will pursue a man in every place, company, action, &c. if therefore one Christian that expecteth salvation by *Faith* in *Jesus*, cans not that which another professing the same Faith cannot, let them not censure, bite, and devour each other; this is the temper rather of *ravenous Wolves* than of *Christs Lambs*.

And Sir, my Respects and Service to you, craving your Acceptance of this poor, but I can say well-meaning Epistle, wherein as I have said, so do I reiterate, that Unity is the way for our Church and State to flourish; it promotes the twisted Interest of Gods glory and our good; it plucks down Satans Interest, and Popish Plotts and Projects it discourageth greatly. And if still we will have no regard to the *Commands of the Gospel*, to the *Love of Christ*, to the *Fellowship of the Spirit*, which is Love, which worketh Love wherever it dwelleth. If we will have no respect to the Glory of God in the Propagation of the Gospel, if we refuse to love our Nation, our Families,

our selves, our own Souls and Bodies, let us go on in Divisions, Strifes and Contentions; but be content to suffer what miseries follow, which most certainly will come upon us, and if God in infinite free Grace and, Mercy prevent not, be our total Destruction and Overthrow.

FOR preventing whereof, let us unanimously with one Consent, with one Shoulder, bear one anothers Infirmities, and endeavour *to serve one another in Love*; ~~That this Heavenly Benediction may fall~~ upon us, our Church and Nation, *viz.*

FINIS.

That the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepheard of the Sheep, through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make us perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, thorough

Je-

Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for Ever, and Ever. Amen.

So heartily, *Sir*, desires and prayes,

Your sincere and

Willing Servant,

A. E.

FINIS.